



EUGEN D'ALBERT

D'Albert's Emperor

What would one not give to take advantage of H. G. Well's Time-Machine to eavesdrop on Bach improvising in St. Thomas's or Brahms snoozing as Liszt plays him his B minor sonata. My own particular fantasy would be a performance by Mozart of his Concerto K467 or Chopin playing some Mazurkas (including of course Op. 33 No. 3). The gramophone has made some of our fantasies a reality - at least a partial one - but it can also confirm Schnabel's warning of self-destruction through preservation.

The two most legendary pianists to penetrate the gramophone era were d'Albert and Busoni. Together they were considered the natural successors to Liszt and Anton Rubinstein. Both were important composers. Both were inspirational rather than definitive artists. Both were noted for their creative and monumental treatment of the classics. Both were especially famous for their performances of the Emperor Concerto...and both made a handful of acoustic discs offering but a tantalisingly fugitive glimpse of their potential.

D'Albert's Emperor is of unique interest. As Liszt's favourite pupil from among that last brilliant elite, which also included Rosenthal, Sauer and Lamond, d'Albert provided the most direct link possible with the work's inception, for it was Liszt's teacher, Czerny, who had introduced it in Vienna in 1812 under Beethoven's own direction. Furthermore, the best-informed of d'Albert's colleagues were ecstatic about his performance of it. That most balanced of conductors Bruno Walter described it as 'Titanic'. Unfortunately, on the evidence of his few commercial records made in the twenties, little remained of a pianistic mastery that was at its peak around the turn of the century before the composition of d'Albert's twenty operas had completely overtaken his performing ambitions. Nevertheless, in 1930 he was persuaded, in his sixty-sixth year, to perform once more just the first movement of the work with which he had once been so closely identified. Miraculously this broadcast performance has survived. Clearly, any comparison with a modern, montaged recording is irrelevant. This is an historic document and if we are to receive the full impact of d'Albert's message we must be prepared to jettison some of our most cherished musical and technical prejudices.

The concerto's pianistic style alone presents a problem. Though transcendental in spirit it is not particularly challenging in terms of Lisztian glitter, Russian glamour or Brahmsian grappings. Horowitz used to complain that it was all too easy and threatened to rewrite its passage-work! Even so, some mildly cumbersome or perversely awkward moments prove stubbornly resistant to normal pianistic skills. Elsewhere the writing often remains thin where it wants to sound vehement and its most imperious gestures are presented in the form of simple arpeggios, scales and turns. It is their context rather than their substance that gives them their pianistic distinction and it takes a big and experienced soloist to grasp the initiative and to avoid being swept into anonymity by the majestic tuttis.

The two classic recordings of the thirties were those by Schnabel and Giesecking, considered at the time to represent sharply opposed views of the Emperor. Set beside d'Albert's impulsive performance however, with its almost arrogant contempt for mere technical niceties or the practicalities of good concerto ensemble, they are made to sound disquietingly similar. One should add,

however, that d'Albert's impetuosity operates within a broad framework which must have been laid down many years earlier. Every important solo or orchestral entry is preceded by a portentous ritardando, and a brisk basic tempo is simply treated as a springboard for an alarming degree of rhythmic licence which sometimes leaves the conductor on the rocks. Yet a challenging and creative mind engages our attention throughout and one quickly becomes aware of a very big physical presence. Note the thunderous bass in those emphatic chords that precede the famous octave passage which is itself turned into a headlong pursuit through a whirlwind of danger. The return is launched with scornful disregard for technical limitations; d'Albert's daring has remained untamed. The virile main subject above a staccato, chromatic bass becomes a storm; every trill is a vital living thing and that final descent in double notes, a stumbling-block to many a pianist, floats down in all its bejewelled elegance.

Above all what makes this performance utterly different is its bold rhythmic freedom. We have come to equate unity of conception with unity of tempo.

D'Albert will have none of it. Tonal contrasts are most broadly emphasised, the tempo being halved as a particularly dark shadow threatens the key-centre. At other times, like Schnabel, d'Albert will push ahead, impatiently. Harmonically sensitive apexes in the melodic line are treated agogically and the second subject provides a living example of a forgotten art. Rubato, today, so often sounds pre-packaged...or like the vulgar application of a glutinous veneer...debasing style and paralysing continuity. D'Albert's rubato springs from the melodic shape and harmonic rhythm and is as natural as the movement of a bird in flight. Despite its rhythmic freedom this whole passage sweeps us forward and is made the more arresting by a pairing of the triplet quavers at its outset giving the sly and disruptive impression of compound time. In short, there is not a dull moment and the occasional scurries and slips melt into insignificance in a conception that raises the work to its full magnitude. Is this, one can but ask, how Beethoven might have imagined it? Many will disagree and the performance must remain controversial; but before we shrug it off as cavalier let us be quite sure that d'Albert, and indirectly Beethoven, are not telling us something vital about the limitations of today's more 'enlightened' approach.

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The Recordings of Eugen D'Albert I

Soon after electric recording was introduced, broadcasting companies began to use the new process to store programmes for later use, for re-use and for distribution to other studios. A 12-inch 78 RPM allowed about 4½ minutes, but continuous recording could be obtained by using two machines with a few grooves duplicated at the start of each fresh disc. Moreover, for technical reasons a sound quality much better than contemporary commercial recordings was possible.

The catalogue of pre-war German radio libraries is of almost non-existent material; broadcasting facilities became prime targets and of what remained political speeches were salvaged for evidence in trials, and all else was scrapped. Perhaps the most tantalising entry of all was for December 1st, 1930. On that day Eugen d'Albert recorded the first movement of the 'Emperor' Concerto. However, by an unbelievable chance, one complete set of the five

single-sided discs has survived and, moreover, in mint condition.

Numbers refer to the Eulenburg Miniature score.

D'Albert's grasp of the architectural structure of the music is indeed monumental in this interpretation. A characteristic of the style of playing in that era is the much longer span of phrases in contrast to the analytical approach to phrasing today. The improvisatory manner in which Eugene d'Albert interprets the opening of the Emperor Concerto could be considered typical of the Lisztian school of piano playing.

BAR: 2-4: The considerable ritenuto in the espressivo passage at the end of these bars adds weight to the fortissimo entry of the orchestra. 5: The slight spreading of the chord dulls the impact of the attack and gives a feeling of upbeat for the orchestral entry.

107-108: The musical intention behind moving towards the Eb trill is quite sound, but in slightly overdoing it, he leaves the orchestra behind.

111: A broadening of the tempo here allows a lyrically aristocratic approach to the theme.

121: The richness in the bass of the piano is well caught in this recording (unusual for 1930).

125: After the chromatic run, d'Albert purposely holds up the tempo and this heightens the drama of the ensuing orchestral tutti.

130: A mysterious atmosphere is created at this entry, leading up to an acceleration in bar 134, highlighting the exploratory nature of the harmonies.

136: D'Albert adopts a faster tempo here, but Seidler-Winkler shows reluctance to maintain this tempo. (For comparison, see comments for bar 394).

144-146: With a sudden acceleration before this passage, d'Albert introduces a flurry of stabbing sforzati on each beat of the bar, revealing its discordant and tempestuous character.

158: Begins the new phrase quite clearly on the second quaver with a slight acceleration to the next bar.

159: The poignant rubato in the following passage might be considered a trifle excessive by current standards.

162: By the use of rubato he clearly shows that the last three quavers of this bar belong to the second half of the phrase.

158-166: Many pianists today decelerate in bar 158 and maintain a slower tempo throughout this entire passage, gradually returning to the original tempo in the crescendo at bar 166.

167-174: Bruno Seidler-Winkler's tightly held rhythm conveys the majestic character of this passage.

174-180: D'Albert enters with a more fluid tempo for the arpeggio passages.

180: Due to the acceleration in the piano part in bar 179, the orchestra arrives late on the first beat of the next bar, forcing d'Albert to play a few more semiquavers in the left hand in order that the sforzato Eb arrives firmly on the second beat.

181: D'Albert's intention to give prominence to the uninterrupted descending scale of the right hand and the leap down to the octave F in the left hand at the second half of this bar, forces him to omit a few semiquavers. Perhaps it is these missing semiquavers which are present in the previous bar! C, Eb and F, the same notes.

184-185: Liszt's teacher, Carl Czerny, studied this concerto with Beethoven and writes that both the quavers in the right hand on the second beat should be

equally accented. D'Albert does not do this, but places the sforzato firmly on the third beat.

187: He employs a lyrical tenuto on each slur.

184-191: He clearly defines the subdivision of the phrase into the following bars: 1+1+2, 1+1+2.

199-202: D'Albert gives a slight emphasis on the half beats of the bar, continuing the syncopation of the preceding passage. These slight accents correspond to the rhythm in the clarinet and bassoon.

203-204: Rich sonorous bass notes are a feature here.

205-206: The tempo expands to allow the expressive quality of the broken octaves in the right hand to come to the fore.

207: D'Albert returns to tempo I.

217-220: Beautiful and even execution of "jeu-perle" runs in these bars.

221-224: A slight accent is placed on each beat of the bar.

225: D'Albert marks the discordant Gb in the left hand with a sforzato.

226-227: He dutifully waits on the bar line for the orchestra.

272: The trills in the following passages which start without an accent are lyrically executed with both hands well synchronized.

266-275: By the subtle adjustment of tempo between the trill bars (taken slightly slower) and the arpeggio bars (taken slightly faster), d'Albert and Seidler-Winkler establish an overall sense of direction towards bar 276, which is in a more flowing tempo. Here the listener feels compelled to be drawn with the current to the majestic interplay between piano and orchestra between bar 304 and 310.

292-303: Czerny writes that both hands should accent first and third beats of each bar. D'Albert has something more interesting to offer; at bars 292-293, just the left hand accents the first and third beats. At 294-295, accents occur on the second and fourth beats of the right hand.

296-297 and 298-299 follow this pattern. At 300-303 he places the accents on the offbeats in the right hand. Here d'Albert wants to create a rhythmic tension (which will be resolved at bar 304).

306-310: Observe how the left hand contributes to the volume of these dramatic chords.

311: Commencing with the upbeat to this bar, d'Albert establishes the fastest tempo throughout the entire movement with no diminution until 332.

333: Here quite a contrast is made to the impetuous octaves in the previous passage; d'Albert relaxes the tempo considerably for this lyrically expressive passage.

335-340: Remaining fairly typical to the style of playing of his era, d'Albert begins the lyrical trills before the fourth beats.

341-349: Expressivo tenuti feature on the upper notes of the phrases.

364: There is a dynamic outburst of broken octaves at this point.

382: D'Albert takes his time on the expressive top note.

389-393: He comes in slightly earlier on the first beat so as not to allow the rhythm in the orchestra to break up the overall line of the phrase.

394: Seidler-Winkler succeeds in maintaining d'Albert's tempo this time.

442: He highlights the modulation by slightly delaying the third beat.

469-472: D'Albert momentarily rushes and is unable to maintain an even tempo transition at the broken octave simiquavers at 479. He therefore is not quite together with the orchestra. 491-494: The entry of the Ab arpeggio in the

"Universal" edition clearly begins on the first beat of the bar as in this performance. For clarity of entry, it is felt that the arpeggio should start after the beat as in the "Eulenburg" edition.

507: D'Albert emphasises the second Bb trill, preparing the way for the Eb minor entry of the second theme at 509.

517: After the ritardando into this bar, d'Albert encourages a return to tempo, but the horns are reluctant to increase the tempo until 519.

521:523: He produces a bell-like sound on the upper and lower B flats of the right hand.

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The Recordings of Eugen D'Albert II

The name of Eugen d'Albert will, no doubt, evoke to many a composer of operas, one of which, Tiefland, is still performed. His fame as a pianist and pupil of Liszt has faded except to the seasoned record collector and the scholar of the late-romantic-piano era. Many of his contemporaries considered him to be one of the greatest pianists of all time, in alignment with such names as Liszt, Anton Rubinstein and Tausig. In 1882, Liszt wrote: "...There was also an artist, an extraordinary pianist, by the name of d'Albert. Hans Richter, the eminent conductor, introduced him to me in Vienna last April. Since then he has worked at Weimar, under my tutelage. Among the young virtuosi from the time of Tausig - Bülow and Rubinstein naturally remain the Senators and Masters - I know of no more gifted as well as dazzling talent than that of d'Albert." D'Albert's fiery temperament - he could be irascible and peppery - often translated itself into his performance at the piano; many considered him to be the greatest virtuoso of the age. His Beethoven was deemed to be definitive. His pianistic career was relatively short, his heyday, as such, extending approximately from Liszt's death in 1886 to d'Albert's appointment as head of the Hochschule in 1907.

D'Albert made his first recordings in 1910. These early discs for the Odeon Company are somewhat superior in performance and tone quality to most of those he made for the Deutsche Grammophon and Vox Companies some years later. For Odeon (prefix xxB) he played on a Bechstein; for DGG (L and m suffices) and Vox, on a Steinway. When he made these records, d'Albert was most probably oblivious of the fact that they would eventually become great historical documents that could not serve adequately his reputation as a great pianist. Brushing aside the wrong notes, occasional fluffs and primitive recording quality, there does emerge more than a suggestion of Liszt's "Little Lion"; an elegantly-turned phrase, a richness and opulence of tone and a certain grandeur of conception. A wide range of dynamics and tonal colour is also apparent.

The Chopin F# Nocturne is given a rather straightforward, non-indulgent performance; some of the nocturnal characteristics of the piece are destroyed by a rather rigid and persistent rhythmic pulse. The climax, however, is handled thrillingly and the closing bars, very sensitively.

Of the Chopin Valse in Ab, Op.42, the earlier Odeon version is much preferable to the later DGG version, recorded around 1916 at a period when d'Albert's technique was less good. In the Odeon version there is much greater technical assurance, the grand manner is much in evidence, and the record makes an interesting comparison with recordings of this piece by other

Liszt pupils, namely Moriz Rosenthal and Emil Sauer. Liszt obviously had his own ideas as to how the Valse should be played.

The Schubert Impromptu in Bb has, unfortunately, been cut down to fit on to a four-minute 78 side. D'Albert has recorded Variations 1 to 4 and the coda, omitting the minor-key fifth variation. This is a fine specimen of his playing, with some pearly right-hand finger-work, especially in Variation 4. The Coda is beautifully poetical.

The F-minor Impromptu is taken at a very fast pace, no doubt to fit onto a 4-minute side. All repeats are omitted. While there is evidence of some rather wild virtuosity, there are a few gaffes in the left-hand, and the overall effect is rather that of a Spanish Fandango!

The Mozart "Rondo alla Turca" should not be used as a specimen of d'Albert's playing. There are some elegant turns of phrase here and there, but such slap-happy performance is very un-Mozartean with little sparkle, a lack of precision and an uncharacteristic rallentando at one hurdle.

D'Albert recorded but one specimen of his master's music. The "Au Bord d'Une Source" was recorded twice. The Odeon recording is superior in every way: the brook "sparkles out among the fern", the cadenzas scintillate and the closing bars are beautifully sensitive and restrained. This is a fine specimen of d'Albert's art. The DGG version, made about six years later, is good, but does not compare with this earlier one.

The reputation of d'Albert as a great exponent of Beethoven is not really borne out by his early recordings of that composer. The drawbacks of primitive recording systems are very much in evidence here. If the Andante Favori had been extended over two sides instead of one, the result might have been very different. As it is, the tempo is more allegro than andante, there is slowing down in double-thirds and octave passages and some rather disastrous two-bar cuts in the coda.

Rondo a Capriccio in G is, perhaps, more representative, with some rhythmical panache and a certain aggressive attack which lives up to the sub-title "Rage over a Lost Penny". Unfortunately, no doubt because of the time factor, the closing bars are a mad scramble.

In the Odeon recording of the Ecossaises (transcribed by d'Albert) the reverse seems to be the case. There are some unwritten repeats made, presumably to fill out the twelve-inch side!

Pale ghosts though some of these recordings may seem, the sensitive listener will extract some of the qualities of one of the greatest and most intriguing pianists of all time. We should consider ourselves fortunate that he condescended to make them.

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Eugène Francis Charles d'Albert's family was of Italian extraction. It probably included Domenico Alberti, to whom the famous bass device is attributed. His grandfather François Benoit d'Albert was captain of cavalry and aide-de-camp to General Frère of the Imperial Army of France. His grandmother, Chrétienne (or Delphine?) Sophie Henriette was the daughter of a successful Hamburg merchant, Johann Carl Schultz. His father, Charles Louis Napoleon was born in 1815 at Nierstellen, a village near Altona, Hamburg.

(Groves gives 1809). François Benoit died "a hero's death for his Emperor" in the famous battle of that year, and next year Charles Louis Napoleon was brought by his mother to London where she set up as a teacher of languages and music and educated, amongst others, her own son. His progress was so rapid that at eight he became a pupil of Kalkbrenner. This tuition was but brief, as Kalkbrenner had to leave England in a hurry for, we are told, "domestic reasons". He received composition lessons from Dr. Wesley and learnt dancing at the King's Theatre, London and at the Conservatoire, Paris. After spells as ballet master at the King's and Covent Garden Theatres, he devoted himself to teaching and composing music for dancing: Sweetheart's Waltz, Edinburgh Quadrille, Sultan's Polka, etc. He settled in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he published "Ballroom Etiquette", ran his own band, and married, in 1863, Annie Rowell. (Annie was not, as has been said, German or Glaswegian, but was born, bred and died in Newcastle.)

Eugène Francis Charles d'Albert was born at 9, Newton Terrace, Glasgow, on April 10th 1864. He did not go to school, (the great Education Act was not yet passed) but was educated by his father. This process is vividly reported in "The Intelligence", a newspaper which he himself edited and produced at the age of 10.

On May 17th, 1876, he entered as one of its first intake, the National Training School for Music (now the Royal College of Music) headed by Arthur Sullivan. The place was won in a competition for which he had sat that January in Newcastle. Thus the family moved from 18, Leazes Terrace, Newcastle-upon-Tyne to lodgings at 16, Kensington Park Road, and then to 14, Alexander Square, South Kensington. He started with the Newcastle Scholarship and to that soon added the Queen's Scholarship. Many years later, W. G. Alcock wrote: "I first saw d'Albert on May 17th, 1876, at the opening of the National Training School for Music. We students had assembled for an examination, the purpose of which was to decide under which Professors we should severally study. We hung about the passages, making new friendships, and listening casually to the examination taking place in what is now the Council Room of the R.C.O. I remember standing at the door watching a chubby boy playing (I think) the Concerto in A minor by Hummel. At its conclusion Ernst Pauer (who examined us) said, 'Ach, you will be with me', evidently seeing future possibilities. His playing certainly was astonishing for a boy of 12, and by the time he was 15, his technical command and sense of interpretation were far ahead of his years.

"Sullivan held a class in Composition, in which d'Albert always distinguished himself, bringing a prodigious amount of work each week. He amazed us all one day by producing a Suite for Pianoforte, which he played brilliantly, Sullivan sending me to fetch Stainer, who was teaching upstairs, to hear it. So, to our delight we had it all again. The Preludium was included in the last A.R.C.M. Syllabus, and the Gavotte and Musette are still played. The work is an astonishing example of precocity, being distinguished by that finish and grasp of effect only to be expected from one far more advanced in years and experience.

"We had to play our own compositions at these lessons, and I was always nervous and diffident when my turn came. So d'Albert most kindly played them for me, making them as presentable as he could. There was a point in an 'alleged' Sonata of mine which pleased him, and I recall his appreciative glance at me when it arrived. I was ever grateful for his condescension and willing help.

"The visit of Wagner to London in 1877 gave us much to think about and wonder at. D'Albert soon acquired a wide knowledge of the 'music of the future', and

would play to us some (then) complicated progression. 'Now just listen to this' 'Isn't that an amazing passage?' and so on.

"His performance of the Schumann Concerto at a Student's Concert at old St. James's Hall, before the Prince and Princess of Wales, showed brilliant promise, later to be fully justified, and his gifts as a composer were proved at the same concert by his Concert Overture in C. I recall his being presented by Sullivan to the Prince and Princess amid great enthusiasm." (He was taught piano by Pauer and harmony and composition by Prout, Stainer and Sullivan. He also studied languages. The concert was on June 23rd, 1879).

The Overture in C was a replacement for an earlier one rejected by Sullivan. This may be the origin of stories of clashes between master and student reported elsewhere. Whatever the difficulties, he was, after all, in his early teens and in a totally new environment, they cannot have amounted to much for he was very soon invited to play for Queen Victoria, and also to stay at Osborne, where he and the Duke of Edinburgh, a violinist of ability, played together. Such invitations could have resulted only from Sullivan's recommendation. Certainly, like many a student, painter and composer, he assisted. There is a score of 'The Martyr of Antioch' with orchestral reduction for piano by D'Albert (October 1880) and very likely he filled in orchestral writing of 'Pinafore' (1878), 'Pirates of Penzance' (1880), 'Patience' (1881) and 'Iolanthe' (1882).

Whatever the supposed difficulties, one report reads, "Progress good and rapid; Conduct Excellent", and when he left at Easter in 1881 his Certificate read:

1. Principal Study: Pianoforte with Highest Honour
2. Harmony: With Highest Honour
3. Counterpoint: With Highest Honour
4. Composition: With Highest Honour
5. General Musical Acquirements: With Highest Honour.

In London, whilst a student, he gave several public performances and shortly after played his own Concerto in A under Hans Richter and was invited to stay with Richter's family in Vienna. He was awarded the very prestigious Mendelssohn Scholarship which must have eased the financial burden on his parents. The letters which he wrote home are an account of musical and domestic life on the Continent, as seen by a normal, albeit talented British teenage living away from home for the first time.

With the heady feeling of youth suddenly liberated from parents and college and immersed in a very different environment viewed through romantically tinted spectacles, he wrote another letter. To a German paper in 1884 he ran down England, the English, English weather and English musical life. It was a silly and impetuous letter from a person not yet mature. Later, the Times, itself less staid than it subsequently became, also published it. His detractors, whilst making a meal of it, neglected to ask, which of us does not blush at some recalled teenage utterance?

(The comments in the following are from conversations with his daughter.)

"He became a German composer, Germany was the centre of music in those days, but he never had a permanent home there. He had many misgivings about Germany. He never lived there except with Carreño in Coswig, Saxony (1892-1895). Absolutely he never became a German national. No, he kept his British passport till the First War, then he became a Swiss citizen." (Teresa Carreño, 1853-1917, talented and tempestuous, Venezuelan pianist and opera singer, capable conductor and slight composer. Undoubtedly each influenced the other's playing.)

Despite his detractors he was invited frequently to play in England; for example, in the Queen's Hall, on January 30th, 1904, he played Liszt's E flat Concerto with the Queen's Hall Orchestra under Henry Wood, and "he broadcast in London in 1928. I went with him. I thought the announcer was a Lord because I was told he spoke the best English in England!" At that time too, "I went with him to the Aeolian Hall to make piano rolls. The wires underneath the keyboard, we were told, went down to the room below where the recording was made. 'What will happen if I make a mistake?' - 'It does not matter, the engineer will correct it.' - 'Then why doesn't he do the whole recording?'"

Despite fears shared by many about piano rolls, Henry Jolles wrote in 1964: "A friend put on the turntable for me one of those records of transfers from old Welte-Mignon rolls on which are preserved from the first decade of this century, the playing of Richard Strauss (fascinating), Reger and Debussy (disappointing), Mahler (shattering) and d'Albert, the only 'real' pianist amongst them."

With the first measures of his own well known Scherzo, the old magic was there again. It came over as a light lullaby despite the fact that he played neither willingly nor in complete freedom for this new invention.."(He refers, presumably, to transfers by Telefunken of rolls made around 1905).

His progress as a student of Liszt, his career as a virtuoso, his marriages and his compositions are well chronicled elsewhere, but the matter of d'Albert as a teacher is a strange one. Liszt very likely expected him to coach new students at Weimar and there may have been times early in his career when a bit of private coaching was useful in making ends meet. Certainly in 1907 he succeeded Joachim as Director of the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. The extent to which he regarded it as a teaching or an administrative post is unclear. (Certainly Joachim had taught extensively.) Backhaus, Dohnanyi, Howard Jones, Rehberg and Risler are amongst those who spoke of themselves as his students. Yet his daughter says, "He detested teaching, he did not have pupils. Various people played for him, he always encouraged them but they never had lessons. Once at Hertenstein by Lake Lucerne, up Rigi, we stopped for coffee. In the restaurant we heard someone playing in another room, remarkably well. He went quietly into the room unobserved. After a while he interrupted him and they had a long chat. Immediately he gave him a letter of introduction.

Only Lubka Kolessa came to us. That was in Austria for two summers running. She would play, and my father walked up and down on the lawn outside. The windows were open and occasionally he would put his head in and make a comment, but he did not take any fee for that.

"In 1929 the Hochschule put on a special course for Americans at the Charlottenburger Schloss. - 'Would my father teach for two months?' - 'No, there was no question of his being in Berlin during the Summer' - 'They would provide a villa outside Berlin with a car and chauffeur'. Then, to put them off, he asked an exorbitant fee; that, too, was accepted, so he had to do it. That is how the picture was taken at Werder. It is one of the few pictures of my father relaxed. Some friends were leaving, and they suddenly turned round and took it."

And a few, unrelated comments:

"He was the first to play Debussy in Berlin. There was no applause whatsoever. One critic wrote: 'I will never forget d'Albert's surprised face when there was no applause.'"

"My father wanted to stop Raupp's book - he did not like it at all."

"People said that he put himself alongside Beethoven. This is wrong. He knew

he was not a great composer."

During his later years he devoted himself increasingly to composition but continued to appear as a pianist. Reviews of these years are mixed. Certainly some critics were still hostile, possibly his form varied, but of some of his work, as Euler said of Newton's at a similar age, "The paw mark of the lion is upon it."

When not travelling, he lived mainly in Italy, Austria and Switzerland. He died in Riga of a heart attack and was taken back to Morcote by Lake Lugano.

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"In the Autumn (of 1901 in Frankfurt) I heard the complete Ring cycle of Wagner for the first time, with lasting impression. Nevertheless, an Opera House Concert with Beethoven's Eb major Concerto played in the fashion of a master by Eugen d'Albert remains a stronger memory."

Otto Klemperer (Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler, Atlantis Bücherei, 1960)

"I heard Eugen d'Albert play Beethoven's Fourth Concerto with a nobility and tenderness which has remained in my mind as the model performance of this work."

Arthur Rubinstein (My Young Years, Knopf, 1973)

"I shall never forget the titanic force of his rendition of Beethoven's concerto in E flat major. I am almost tempted to say he did not play it, he personified it. In his intimate contact with his instrument, he appeared to me like a new centaur, half piano, half man."

Bruno Walter (Theme and Variations, Alfred Knopf, 1946)

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Rudolf Firkau, Pablo Casals.*

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